Late Placement of the Finite Verb in Old Norse *Fornyrðislag* Meter

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In Old Norse poetry, there is a syntactic difference between bound clauses (subordinate clauses and main clauses introduced by a conjunction) and unbound clauses (main clauses not introduced by a conjunction). In bound clauses, the finite verb is often placed late in the sentence, violating the V2 requirement upheld in prose. In unbound clauses, the V2 requirement is normally adhered to, but in *fornyrðislag* poetry, late placement of the finite verb is occasionally found. Hans Kuhn explained these instances as a result of influence from West Germanic poetry. The present article argues that these instances can be explained as a remnant of the Proto-Norse word order, and that this explanation is better supported by the data.[*]

1. Introduction.
Fornyrðislag is the Old Norse version of the traditional Germanic alliterative meter. Kuhn (1933) noted that poems in *fornyrðislag* sometimes contain sentences where the finite verb occurs late in the sentence, even in independent clauses where the verb normally occurs early both in poetry and prose. Kuhn explained this peculiarity as influence from West Germanic poetry. The present article argues against Kuhn's explanation of foreign influence and offers the preservation of archaic syntax as an alternative explanation.

Section 2 contains an overview of Old Icelandic syntax and Kuhn's syntactic analysis of Germanic poetry. Section 3 explains Kuhn's theory of West Germanic influence on *fornyrðislag*. Section 4 presents data on late placement of the verb and shows that it correlates with a known

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linguistically archaic feature. Section 5 sums up the results and their relevance.

2. Overview of Old Icelandic Syntax.
2.1. *Prose*.
By the time of the oldest preserved manuscripts, the placement of the finite verb in Icelandic prose exhibits symmetric V2 behavior. Thus, in all types of main and embedded clauses, the verb must occur in the first or second position. The second position is, in most cases, normal and unmarked, but the first position is often a valid stylistic choice. The following two quotes from AM 237 fol (Þorvaldur Bjarnarson 1878:162, 165; this is a diplomatic edition but I have used normalized Old Norse spelling for convenience) show both possibilities, with finite verbs in bold.[1]

(1) a. Hurð fyr   durum   **merkir**   skynsama menn
       door before entrance symbolizes sagacious people

    þá   es   hraustlega **standa** at móti   villumǫnnum.
    those   that   stoutly   stand   against   heretics

    'The door before the entrance symbolizes sagacious people who
    stoutly resist heretics.'

   b. Ok **fremja** þeir sýslu   sína   ósýnilega
      and commit   they business theirs invisibly

    svá   sem **eru** sjálfir   ósýnilegir.
    such   as   are   themselves invisible

    'And they go about their business invisibly such as they
    themselves are invisible.'

Usually considered the oldest Icelandic manuscript, AM 237 fol is dated to the mid-12th century. In this manuscript, the finite verb is never

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[1] For Old Norse, there is a tradition of using normalized spelling rather than citing texts in the form they appear in the manuscripts.

placed later than the second position, and this is true for Old Icelandic prose in general. Thus, one does not find sentences like the following:

(2) *[Hurð fyr   durum]$_1$ [skynsama menn]$_2$ **merkir**$_3$
     [door before entrance]$_1$ [sagacious people]$_2$ symbolizes$_3$

It can be assumed that 12th and 13th century Icelanders would have found a clause like this ungrammatical or, at the very least, unsuitable for prose. In poetry, as we shall see, different rules apply.

2.2. Kuhn's (1933) Discoveries.

In an article published in 1933, the philologist Hans Kuhn made a large number of observations on the word order of poetry in the Old Germanic languages, including Old Icelandic. The best known of these were re-ferred to by Kuhn as the *Satzpartikelgesetz* 'law of sentence particles' and the *Satzspitzengesetz* 'law of sentence openings'. These are now usually referred to as Kuhn's laws. The validity and proper interpretation of Kuhn's laws remains a hotly debated topic (for recent views see, for instance, Feulner 2010, Kristján Árnason 2002, and references cited there) and goes beyond the scope of this article. It suffices to note that I do not believe that the views set forth here are dependent on any particular interpretation of Kuhn's laws. Since Kuhn believed that finite verbs functioned as "sentence particles" he saw their position in the sentence as related to a host of other phenomena. Nothing, however, pre-vents one from considering the finite verb's behavior outside of this somewhat controversial framework.

   One of the phenomena described by Kuhn is a dichotomy in the behavior of finite verbs in Old Icelandic poetry. To describe this, Kuhn's distinction between BOUND and UNBOUND clauses needs to be intro-duced. Bound clauses are subordinate clauses and main clauses introduced by a coordinating conjunction. Unbound clauses are main clauses not introduced by a conjunction. Kuhn pointed out that in most types of Old Icelandic poetry, finite verbs in unbound clauses must occur in the first or second syntactic position, just as they do in prose. In contrast, in bound clauses, the finite verb can occur anywhere in the sentence, and late V2-violating placement is common—a stark difference to the word order of prose. The example in 3, from Sturla Þórðarson,

Hákonarkviða 9; Finnur Jónsson 1908–1915 IIB:20, illustrates both points. I have bolded the finite verbs in this and subsequent examples.

(3) **Svalg** hvert hús   **swallowed** every house
    heitum munni   hot.DAT mouth.DAT
    viðar hundr   wood.GEN dog
    Verma bygðar,   Vermir.GEN settlement.GEN
    ok svipkárr   and fierce
    selju rakki   willow.GEN dog
    of garðshlið   over gates
    grenjandi **fór**.   howling **went**

    'The dog of wood swallowed every house in the Vermir's settlement with his hot mouth and the fierce dog of the willow went howling over the gates.'

The strophe quoted, from a late 13th century poem, consists of two clauses. The first is a main clause not introduced by a conjunction and thus an unbound clause. Such clauses must have the finite verb in first or second position, and indeed, this one has its verb right at the outset. The second clause is a main clause introduced with the conjunction *ok* 'and', and is, thus, a bound clause. Bound clauses in poetry can have the finite verb in any position, and this one has it at the end, a syntactic arrangement not found in contemporary prose.

    Even the elaborate *dróttkvætt* meter, the mainstay of Old Norse court poetry, follows Kuhn's dichotomy. Despite its notoriously intricate word order—where sentences are frequently intertwined with each other—the V2 requirement is strictly followed in unbound clauses, and only in unbound clauses. The example in 4 is from Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, Haustlǫng 2; Finnur Jónsson 1908–1915 IA 14, IB 14; North 1997:16–19.

(4) Segjǫndum **fló** sagna   commanders.DAT **flew**.SG hosts.GEN
    snótar ulfr at móti   maiden.GEN wolf a-gainst
    í gemlis ham gǫmlum   in eagle.GEN skin.DAT old.DAT
    glamma ó fyr skǫmmu;   noisily un- ago -short.DAT

settisk ǫrn, þars æsir,   **sit**.PAST.REFL eagle where gods
ár-Gefnar mar **bǫru**   harvest-Gefn.GEN horse.ACC **carried**.PL
(**vasa** byrgi-Týr bjarga   **was**-not fortress-Týr mountains.GEN
bleyði vændr) á seyði. cowardice.GEN accused on cooking-fire.ACC

'An unshort time ago, the wolf of the maiden flew noisily towards
the commanders of hosts in an old eagle skin. The eagle sat down
where the gods carried the horse of harvest-Gefn to the cooking fire.
The fortress-Týr of the mountains was not accused of cowardice.'[2]

This strophe, from one of the most archaic poems preserved, contains
four clauses. The three unbound clauses all have their finite verb in the
first or second position, but the subordinate clause, introduced by *þars*
'where', has a late placement of the verb.

Kuhn explained the late placement of the verb in bound clauses as an
archaic Germanic feature, preserved in a systematic way in poetry after it
was lost in ordinary language. Comparisons with other Germanic lan-
guages make this seem very probable, and recent commentators agree:

> the distinction between unbound and bound clauses found in Old
> Germanic poetry has the characteristics of an archaism, instantiating
> the missing link in the development from partial V2 in Early Germanic
> to full V2 in Northwest Germanic.   (Þórhallur Eyþórsson 2009:75)

There thus seems to be a general agreement that Old Norse poetry can
reflect syntactic features from earlier stages of the language.

2.3. Differences among Meters.
To complicate the picture above somewhat, different poetic meters dis-
play different syntactic properties. The rules described in section 2.2 are
valid for the large corpus of *dróttkvætt* poetry and most other meters used
by the court poets. The so-called Eddic meters, best known for their use
in mythological and heroic folk poetry, have some properties of their
own. Poetry in the *ljóðaháttr* meter features the systematic abandonment
of the syntactic properties observed by Kuhn. Not only is V2 freely

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[2] More than one interpretation is possible on some points (see North's discus-
sion), but the syntactic observations remain true regardless.

violated in unbound clauses, but Kuhn's laws of sentence particles and sentence openings are also abandoned wholesale. To at least some extent, these seem to be the effects of a strong preference for the stylistic fronting of the most important semantic element, but other factors may be at work as well. The syntax of *ljóðaháttr* is a rich subject for study (see, most recently, Þórhallur Eyþórsson 2009:71–75) but is not my focus here.

The *fornyrðislag* meter is the most direct Old Norse descendant of the common Germanic alliterative verse. In general, the distinction between bound and unbound clauses is observed in it, as in the following strophe from Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar 10:[3]

(5) **Ertattu**, Hiorvarðr,   art-not-thou Hiorvarðr
     heilráðr konungr,   wholesome-counseled king
     fólcs oddviti,   host.GEN leader
     þóttu frægr **sér**;   though-thou famous be
     léztu eld eta   hadst-thou fire.ACC eat
     iofra bygðir,   kings.GEN settlements.ACC
     enn þeir angr við þic   yet they harm.ACC to thee
     ecci **gorðo**.   none did.PL

     'You, Hiǫrvarðr, leader of the host, are not a king of wholesome
     counsel though you are renowned. You had fire eat the settlements of
     the kings, yet they did you no harm.'

The strophe in 5 contains two unbound clauses, starting with *ertattu* 'you are not' and *léztu* 'you had', and both have the finite verb as their first constituent. The two bound clauses, starting with *þóttu* 'though you' and *enn* 'yet' both have late placement of the finite verb. However, while the difference between bound and unbound clauses is normally observed in *fornyrðislag*, there are some exceptions. Those exceptions are the subject of this article.

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[3] This and all subsequent citations of poetry from the Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda are from Neckel 1983.

3. V2 Violations in Unbound Clauses in *Fornyrðislag*.
3.1. Kuhn's Theory.
There are a number of instances in *fornyrðislag* poetry where unbound clauses have late placement of the verb, in violation of the general principle. The following are some examples from the Eddic poems.

(6) a. Vǫluspá 26.1

Þórr einn þar **vá**
Þórr one there **fought**
'Þórr (Thor) alone fought there.'

b. Hymiskviða 32.5

Karl orð um **qvað**
Man word(s) EXPL **spoke**
'The man spoke.'

c. Brot af Sigurðarkviðu 5.3–4

hrafn at meiði /hátt **kallaði**
raven in tree /high **called**
'The raven in the tree called loudly.'

d. Vǫlundarkviða 1.5–6

þær á sævar strǫnd /**settuz** at hvílaz
they.FEM on sea.GEN coast /**sat**.REFL.PL to rest.REFL
'They sat down on the coast to rest.'[4]

The question arises whether these exceptions to the rule can be explained in some principled way. Kuhn argued that they could. His idea was that poems dealing with subject matters known from West Germanic sources showed linguistic and metrical affinity to West Germanic alliterative poetry (Kuhn 1933, 1936, 1939). In his view, this was evidence that the

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[4] It is worth noting explicitly that exceptions of this kind do not usually violate Kuhn's laws, which only regulate the placement of unstressed words. The verbs in the four examples shown here all carry metrical stress and are thus not affected.

poems in question had been translated or adapted from West Germanic originals. Often, it would seem, those original poems were German.

In Kuhn's classification, most of the heroic poetry in the Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda belongs to the *Fremdstofflieder*, or foreign matter poems, while most *fornyrðislag* poetry preserved in other manuscripts, as well as the mythological poems of the Codex Regius, belong to the *heimische Dichtung*, or native poetry.[5] In the following text, I need to use these concepts to discuss and evaluate Kuhn's theory, but this does not mean that I endorse this particular way of splitting the corpus.

In Kuhn's theory, the foreign matter poems in the Codex Regius are Atlakviða, Brot af Sigurðarkviðu, Hamðismál, Fáfnismál, Guðrúnarhvǫt, Grípisspá, Guðrúnarkviða I, Guðrúnarkviða II, Guðrúnarkviða III, Helreið Brynhildar, Oddrúnargrátr, Reginsmál, Sigrdrífumál, Sigurðarkviða in skamma, and Vǫlundarkviða. The foreign matter poetry not preserved in Codex Regius consists of Hildibrandskviða, Hlǫðskviða, and fragments in Vǫlsunga saga. The native poems in the Codex Regius are Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar, Helgakviða Hundingsbana I, Helgakviða Hundingsbana II, Hymiskviða, Vǫluspá, and Þrymskviða. The native poems in other manuscripts include Baldrs draumar, Grottasǫngr, Rígsþula, Hervararkviða, Hrókskviða, Innsteinskviða, Víkarsbálkr, Sigurðarbálkr, Erfikvæði um Magnús berfœtt, Merlínússpá, and a substantial number of shorter poems and fragments.

With this classification in mind, I turn to Kuhn's explanation of the late placement of the verb in unbound clauses. Kuhn pointed out that late placement of the verb in unbound clauses is frequent in surviving West Germanic poetry. He believed that the *fornyrðislag* exceptions could thus be explained as a result of West Germanic influence. If this were true, one would expect the exceptions to be more frequent in foreign matter poems than in native poems. Indeed, Kuhn discerned a significant difference in this respect. In the 3360 long lines of native poetry in his investigation, he found 63 instances of late placement of the verb (1.9%). In 1820 long lines of foreign matter poems, he found 88 such instances (4.8%) (Kuhn 1933:61–62). This is a significant difference, unlikely to be coincidental.

Building on earlier work by Heusler (1906), Kuhn made a distinction between older and newer foreign matter poetry. In Heusler's system, the

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[5] The translation "foreign matter poems" is used in Fidjestøl 1999:294–323.

older poems are Atlakviða, Brot af Sigurðarkviðu, Hamðismál, Hlǫðskviða, and Vǫlundarkviða. The newer poems constitute the rest. Kuhn points out that the old poems have a V2 violations ratio of 31/620 (5.0%), while the newer poems have a ratio of 57/1200 (4.8%), not a significant difference. Assuming the correctness of Heusler's chronology, it would thus appear that there is no chronological explanation for the frequency of V2 violations. It is, rather, purely a matter of foreign influence.

3.2. Criticism of the Classical German Account.

The classical German account of the origins and development of the Norse heroic poems can be said to consist of Heusler's work on Eddic chronology (1906), Kuhn's series of articles on West Germanic traits in Old Norse poetry (1933, 1936, 1939), and Mohr's articles (1938, 1939) on the similarities between newer Eddic poetry and Danish ballads. Although these works have been extremely influential, they have always had their critics. In recent years, the criticism has become extensive and, in my view, convincing (see, in particular, Fidjestøl 1999 and Sävborg 2003). Let me very briefly summarize the case against the Heusler-Kuhn-Mohr account:

- Heusler's chronology is based on very subjective stylistic criteria. It finds little or no support in seemingly more objective and reliable linguistic criteria.

- Kuhn tried to show that the foreign matter poems have German features, but the extant corpus of alliterative German poetry is so meager that firm conclusions cannot be based on it. Additionally, many of the foreign matter poems show few or none of the linguistic traits Kuhn is concerned with, while some of the native poems (such as Vǫluspá) do show them.

- Mohr's theory assumes the existence not only of German poems no longer extant but of a whole genre (*novellistische Spielmannslieder*) which is not attested at all. His chronology of ballads does not fit well with modern research.

With this in mind, it is necessary to critically examine the phenomena discovered by Kuhn outside the framework within which they were originally described.

4. Towards an Alternative Explanation.

4.1. V2 Violations in the Codex Regius.

While Kuhn (1933:61–62) lists the total number of V2 violations in different groups of poetry, he does not list them individually for each poem. In order to get a clear picture, I have thus done my own analysis. My numbers are similar to those listed by Kuhn but tend to be slightly lower. I am not certain about the reason for the discrepancies. Sometimes, the syntactic analysis of the poetry is not straightforward, and I may have rejected more ambiguous cases than Kuhn did. It is also possible that Kuhn simply had a keener eye for this and spotted some instances that I missed. I read each poem carefully twice, but it is inevitable that I have made some mistakes. It may be some consolation that since I list each instance, any future analysis can build on and improve upon my work.

Many of the poems in the *fornyrðislag* corpus contain formulaic repetitions of individual long lines or half-stanzas. When estimating the frequency of a linguistic phenomenon in a poem, it seems methodologically preferable to exclude these repetitions. In this, I am modeling my work after Fidjestøl's (1999) analysis of the frequency of the *um/of* expletive particle (see section 4.3). Where the text of the manuscript is ambiguous or seemingly corrupt, I have used the reading of the edition used in each case. Undertaking independent textual criticism would have been time consuming and increased the possibility of bias on my part.

I have taken a fairly broad view of what constitutes *fornyrðislag*, but there are inevitably some borderline cases that require a judgment call. I have included Hamðismál and Hlǫðskviða: Although those poems show an affinity with *málaháttr* they can still be viewed as composed in a variant of *fornyrðislag*. I have also included Víkarsbálkr and Merlínússpá, despite the fact that they contain some strophes in *kviðuháttr*.[6] I have left out Atlamál, which is clearly in *málaháttr* throughout, and Hárbarðsljóð,

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[6] For the syntax of *kviðuháttr*, Gade (2005) offers a lucid account. Research on *málaháttr* is hampered by the very sparse corpus of poetry in this meter, with Atlamál being the only substantial poem. In Atlamál, V2 violations in unbound clauses occur much more often than in any poem in *fornyrðislag*.

composed in a free metrical form. Atlakviða is very much a borderline case, showing both an affinity with *málaháttr* and other irregularities. I have included it here, but I can certainly see an argument for leaving it out.

Below, I have listed and tabulated the V2 violations known to me in the Codex Regius poems containing 75 long lines or more. I have omitted the very shortest poems, where random variations are likely to have an excessive effect. The foreign matter poems (7–16) and native poems (17–22) are listed separately. I use the Neckel–Kuhn 1983 edition throughout.[7]

Foreign Matter Poems (Codex Regius)

(7)   Atlakviða

   3.1   Atli mic   hingat sendi.
            Atli me.ACC hither   sent
            'Atli sent me here.'

   24.4   klecqva hann sízt hugði
            complain he   least thought
            'He did not at all think of complaining.'

   24.5   blóðuct þat á   bióð   lǫgðo
            bloody it on plate.ACC laid.PL
            'They placed it bloody on a plate.'

   39.7–8   æva   flióð   ecci   /gáði fiarghúsa
            never woman nothing /spared temples.GEN
            'The woman did not at all spare the temples.'

   41.1–2   Hon beð   broddi   /gaf blóð   at drecca.
            she bed.DAT point.DAT /gave blood.ACC to drink
            'With a (spear) point she gave the bed blood to drink.'

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[7] The glosses and translations reflect, in each case, one possible approach to the text. Many of the quotes are open to more than one interpretation, but usually the differences do not affect the syntactic property under examination.

(8)   Brot af Sigurðarkviðu

    4.1   Sumir   úlf   sviðo.
           some.MASC.PL   wolf.ACC   roasted.PL
           'Some were roasting a wolf.'

    4.2   Sumir   orm   sniðo.
           some.MASC.PL   worm.ACC   cut.PL
           'Some were cutting a worm.'

    4.3–4   Sumir   Gothormi   /af   gera   deildo.
           some.MASC.PL   Gothormr.DAT /from   wolf.DAT shared.PL
           'Some shared with Gothormr from the wolf.'

    7.1–2   Einn því   Họgni /andsvor   veitti.
           Alone this.DAT   Họgni   /answers.ACC   gave
           'Họgni was the only one to answer this.'

    5.3–4   hrafn at meiði   /hátt   kallaði
           raven on tree.DAT /loudly   called
           'A raven on a tree called loudly.'

    13.3   hitt herglọtuðr   /hyggia   téði
           that army-destroyer /consider began
           'The army-destroyer began to consider that.'

(9)   Grípisspá

    1.3–4   hvat þann þióðkonung /þegnar nefna
           what that   people-king /people   call
           'what do people call that king'

    3.5   Sigurðr ec heiti.
           Sigurðr I am-called
           'I am called Sigurðr.'

    16.2   brúðr mæla tecr
           woman speak starts
           'The woman starts to speak.'

27.3–4   hana Brynhildi   /bragnar   nefna
         her   Brynhildr.ACC /people   call
         'People call her Brynhildr.'

29.5   svefn þú né   sefr
         sleep thou not   sleepst
         'You cannot sleep.'

34.5–6   fullqvæni   þá   /fylkir væri
         well-married   then /king   were
         'Then the king would be well married.'

43.5   þá   homom   víxlit
         then shapes   exchange.2ND.PL
         'Then you exchange shapes.'

49.7–8   þó ér víf   konungs /vélom   beittoð
         yet you woman.ACC   king.GEN /tricks.DAT used
         'Yet you used tricks against the king's wife.'

(10) Guðrúnarhvot
     7.1–2   Hlæiandi Guðrún /hvarf   til scemmo.
             laughing Guðrún /turned to storehouse.ACC
             'Guðrún turned laughing to the storehouse.'

     7.3–4   kumbl konunga /ór   kerom   valði
             helmets kings.GEN /from chests.DAT chose
             'She chose the helmets of kings from the chests.'

     13.7–8 því   ec land um stéc,   /at   lifa scyldac
             therefore I land EXPL stepped-I /that live should-I
             'I stepped onto the land because I was to live.'

     21.1   Iorlom   ollom   /óðal   batni.
             jarl.DAT.PL all.DAT.PL /inheritance improve
             'May every man's inheritance improve.'

(11) Guðrúnarkviða I

   2.5–6   þeygi Guðrún /gráta mátti
              yet-not Guðrún /cry   could
              'Yet Guðrún could not cry.'

   4.10   þó ec ein   lifi
              yet I   alone live
              'Yet I alone am (still) alive.'

   6.5–8   mínir   siau   synir /sunnan lanz,
              my.MASC.PL seven sons /south   land.GEN

              /verr   inn átti, /í val   fello
              husband the eighth /in battle-slain.ACC fell.PL

              'My seven sons fell in battle in the south, my husband was
              the eighth.'

   7.3–4   þau   á vági   /vindr of   léc
              they.NEUT.ACC on sea.DAT /wind EXPL toyed
              'The wind toyed with them on the sea.'

   8.5   þat ec alt um   beið
              this I   all EXPL suffered
              'All this I suffered.'

   21.1–2 Svá ér   um lýða   /landi   eyðit.
              so   you EXPL people.ACC /land.DAT destroy
              'In such a way you destroyed the people in the country.'

(12) Guðrúnarkviða II

   1.2   móðir mic fœddi
              mother me   raised
              'My mother brought me up.'

   3.5   sofa   þeir   né   máttoð
              sleep.INF they.MASC not   could-not
              'They could not sleep.'

5.7   iór   þat vissi
             horse it   knew
             'The horse knew it.'

6.2   lengi hugir deilduz
             long   minds divided.REFL.PL
             'For long was my mind divided.'

9.1–4   Hví þú   mér, Hǫgni, /harma   slíca,
           why thou me   Hǫgni /miseries.ACC such.PL.ACC

           /vilia   laussi, /vill   um   segia?
           joy.GEN less   /wantest EXPL say.INF

           'Why do you, Hǫgni, want to tell such miseries to my joyless self?'

14.5–6 hon mér   at gamni   /gullbócaði
           she me.DAT to enjoyment /gold-embroidered
           'She embroidered in gold to my enjoyment.'

22.4   ráða   ec né   máttac
           interpret I not could-I
           'I could not interpret.'

32.1–2 Grátandi Grímildr /greip   við orði.
           crying   Grímildr /grasped by word.DAT
           'Crying did Grímildr start to speak.'

35.5–6 vér   siau   daga   /svalt land riðom
           we.PL seven days.ACC /cool land rode
           'For seven days we rode the cool land.'

36.1–3 Þar hliðverðir   /hárar   borgar.
           there gatekeepers /high.GEN fortress.GEN

/grind   upp   luco
/gate   up   opened

'There the gatekeepers of the high fortress opened the gates.'

38.1–2   Svá   mic   nýliga /nornir vekia.
         such me.ACC newly /norns   wake
         'So the Norns have waked me just now.'

(13) Hamðismál
     1.5–8   ár   um morgin   /manna   bǫlva
              early in   morning.ACC /people.GEN misfortunes.GEN

              /sútir   hveriar /sorg   um   qveyqva
              regrets each.PL /sorrow   EXPL awaken.PL

              'Early in the morning all regrets over people's misfortunes
              make sorrow come alive.'[8]

     7.7   glýia   þú   né   gáðir
              joy.PL.GEN thou not cared
              'You did not care for joy.'

     7.8   Gunnarr þér   svá   vildi.
              Gunnarr thee.DAT thus wanted
              'Gunnarr wanted it thus for you.'

     21.1   Sæll   ec þá   þǫttomc.
              happy.MASC I   then consider.1ST.REFL.PL
              'I should consider myself happy.'

     23.3   í blóði   bragnar lágo
              in blood.DAT men   lay
              'Men lay in blood.'

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[8] This passage is obscure and also allows non-V2 violating interpretations.

26.5–6   opt   ór   þeim   belg
         often out-of that.DAT bag.DAT

         /bǫll   ráð   koma
         /strong.PL advice.PL   come.PL

         'Often strong advice comes out of that bag.'

(14) Oddrúnargrátr

6.6   svá   hon sinn   fǫður leyndi
         thus she her.MASC father hid
         'Thus she kept it secret from her father.'

17.1–2   Brynhildr í búri   /borða   racþi.
         Brynhildr in bower.DAT /border   embroidered
         'Brynhildr embroidered a border in the bower.'

22.5   þeygi   við   máttom
         yet-not we.DUAL   could
         'Yet we two could not.'

28.5–6   þeir ór   Hǫgna /hiarta   scáro
         they from Hǫgni /heart.ACC   cut
         'They cut the heart out of Hǫgni.'

(15) Sigurðarkviða in skamma

5.1–2   Hon sér   at lífi   /lǫst né vissi.
         she herself.DAT   in life.DAT /vice not knew
         'She was aware of no vice in her life.'

14.1   Ýmist   hann hugði.
         various he   considered
         'He considered various things.'

17.1–2   Eino   því   Hǫgni /annsvor   veitti.
         only.DAT   this.DAT   Hǫgni /answers.ACC   gave
         'Only with this did Hǫgni answer.'

25.8   þér   brœðr   lifa
       thee.DAT brothers live
       'Your brothers are alive.'

26.5   þeir   sér   hafa
       they   themselves.DAT have
       'They have for themselves.'

45.7   Hon   krǫng   of   komz.
       she   difficult.FEM EXPL came.REFL
       'She came with difficulty.'

(16) Vǫlundarkviða
   1.5–6   þær   á   sævar   strǫnd
           they.FEM on   sea.GEN coast.ACC

           /settuz   at   hvílaz
           /sat.REFL.PL to   rest.REFL

           'They sat down on the coast to rest.'

   4.3–4   Slagfiðr   oc   Egill
           Slagfiðr   and   Egill

           /sali   fundo   auða
           /halls.ACC found.PL   empty.PL.ACC

           'Slagfiðr and Egill found the halls empty.'

   15.1   Hlaðguðr oc   Hervor /borin   var Hlǫðvé
           Hlaðguðr and Hervor /born.FEM.SG   was Hlǫðvér.DAT
           'Hlaðguðr and Hervor, was born to Hlǫðvér.'

   16.1   Hon   inn um   gecc
           she   in   EXPL walked
           'She walked inside.'

17.1   Tenn   hánom   teygiaz
       teeth   him.DAT   stretch.REFL
       'His teeth extend forward.'

29.1–2   'Vel   ec',   qvað   Vǫlundr,   /'verða   ec   á   fitiom'
         well   I   said   Vǫlundr   /become   I   on   webbed-feet
         'Good thing I'll have my webbed feet', said Vǫlundr.'[9]

29.5–6   Hlæiandi   Vǫlundr   /hófz   at   lopti.
         laughing   Vǫlundr   /rose.REFL   into   air.DAT
         'Laughing did Vǫlundr rise into the air.'

29.7–8   grátandi   Bǫðvildr   /gecc   ór   eyio
         crying   Bǫðvildr   /walked   from   island.DAT
         'Crying did Bǫðvildr walk from the island.'

41.7–8   Ec   vætr   hánom   /vinna   kunnac
         I   nothing   him.DAT   /resist   was-able-I
         'I was not at all able to resist him.'

41.9–10   ec   vætr   hánom   /vinna   máttac
          I   nothing   him.DAT   /resist   could-I
          'I could not at all resist him.'

Native Poems (Codex Regius)

(17) Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar
    1.5–7   þó   hagligar   /Hiorvarðz   konor
            yet   pretty.FEM.PL   /Hiorvarðr.GEN   women

            /gumnum   þiccia
            /men.DAT   seem

            'Yet Hiorvarðr's women seem pretty to men.'

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[9] This passage is obscure and also allows non-V2 violating interpretations.

(18) Helgakviða Hundingsbana I

    4.1–2   Þær   austr   oc   vestr /enda   fálo.
                   they.FEM east and west /ends.ACC hid.PL
                   'They hid the ends in the east and the west.'

    47.1–2   Þeir   af   ríki   /renna léto.
                   they.MASC with power /run   made
                   'With power they made them run.'

(19) Helgakviða Hundingsbana II

    1.5–6   ér úlf   grán   /inni   họfðot
                   you wolf.ACC grey.ACC /inside had
                   'You had a grey wolf inside.'

    5.3–4   hvar, hermegir, /heima eigoð?
                   where army-sons /home have
                   'Where do you live, warriors?'

    24.5   þeir merct hafa
                   they shown have
                   'they have shown'

(20) Hymiskviða

    1.1–2   Ár   valtívar   /veiðar   námo
                   yore slain-gods   game/catch.PL took.PL
                   'in times of yore, the gods of the slain got game/catch'

    18.5–6 Sveinn sýsliga /sveif til scógar.
                   boy   quickly glided to wood.GEN
                   'The boy hurried to the wood.'

    32.5   Karl orð   um   qvað
                   man word(s) EXPL said
                   'the man said'

(21) Vǫluspá

    5.5   sól þat né   vissi
                sun it   not knew
                'the sun did not know'

    5.7   stiǫrnor þat né   visso
                stars   it   not knew.PL
                'the stars did not know'

    5.9   máni þat né vissi
                moon it   not knew
                'the moon did not know'

    6.5–6   nótt   oc niðiom   /nǫfn   um gáfo
                night.DAT and relatives.DAT /names.ACC EXPL gave.PL
                'They gave names to Night and her relatives.'

    10.5–6 þeir   manlícon
                they.MASC human-shapes.ACC

                /mǫrg   um   gorðo
                /many.PL.ACC EXPL   made.PL

                'They made many human shapes.'

    18.1   Ǫnd   þau   né átto.
                breath.ACC they.NEUT not had.PL
                'They did not have breath.'

    18.2   óð   þau   né hǫfðo
                spirit.ACC they.NEUT not had.PL
                'They did not have spirit.'

    20.9   þær   lǫg   lǫgðo
                they.FEM laws.ACC laid
                'They laid down laws.'

20.10   þær   líf   kuro
        they.FEM lives.ACC chose
        'They chose out lives.'

21.10   þó hon enn lifir
        yet she still lives
        'Yet she is still alive.'

22.1   Heiði   hana   héto
        Heiðr.ACC her.ACC called.PL
        'They called her Heiðr.'

26.1   Þórr einn þar   vá
        Þórr alone fought there
        'Thor alone fought there.'

26.3   hann sialdan sitr
        he   seldom sits
        'He seldom sits.'

(22) Þrymskviða

6.3–4   greyiom   sínom   /gullbǫnd   snøri
        bitches.DAT his.PL.DAT /golden-collars wove
        'He wove golden collars for his bitches.'

8.5–6   hann   engi maðr   /aptr um   heimtir
        it.ACC   none person /again EXPL gets
        'No-one can get it back.'

10.5–6 opt   sitianda   /sǫgor um   fallaz
        often sitting.GEN /stories EXPL fall.REFL
        'Often does the one who sits omit stories.'

13.3–4 allr ása   salr /undir bifðiz
        all gods.GEN hall /under moved.REFL
        'All the hall of the gods shook.'

23.7–8 einnar   mér   Freyio   /ávant   þiccir
         one.FEM.GEN me.DAT Freyia.GEN /lacking seems
         'Only Freyia seems to me to be lacking'

32.5 hon scell   um   hlaut
       she blow.ACC EXPL received
       'She got a blow.'

Poem	Long lines	V2 violations	Ratio
Atlakviða	175.5	5	2.8%
Brot af Sigurðarkviðu	75	6	8.0%
Grípisspá	209	8	3.8%
Guðrúnarhvǫt	87	4	4.6%
Guðrúnarkviða I	100.5	6	6.0%
Guðrúnarkviða II	175	11	6.3%
Hamðismál	106	6	5.7%
Oddrúnargrátr	125	4	3.2%
Sigurðarkviða in skamma	279	6	2.2%
Vǫlundarkviða	143	10	7.0%
Sum	1475	66	4.5%

Table 1. Foreign matter poems in the Codex Regius.

Poem	Long lines	V2 violations	Ratio
Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar	100	1	1.0%
Helgakviða Hundingsbana I	227	2	0.9%
Helgakviða Hundingsbana II	214	3	1.4%
Hymiskviða	152	3	2.0%
Vǫluspá	269	13	4.8%
Þrymskviða	109	6	5.5%
Sum	1071	28	2.6%

Table 2. Native poems in the Codex Regius.

The tables above show the foreign matter poems with a ratio of 4.5 violations per 100 long lines, while the native poems have a ratio of 2.6/100. At first glance, this is consistent with Kuhn's explanation in terms of foreign influence. When one examines individual poems, however, this explanation becomes less satisfactory. Only the three Helgi poems show a ratio consistently lower than that found in the foreign matter poems. The three mythological poems (Hymiskviða, Vǫluspá, and Þrymskviða) have a ratio similar to that found in the foreign matter poems. Since the mythological poems belong to the native poetry, Kuhn resorted to another explanation for the V2 violations that occur in them, namely, the influence from *ljóðaháttr*. The foreign influence hypothesis thus seems to have rather limited explanatory power.

4.2. V2 Violations in Other Poems.

Let us now turn to poems in other manuscripts, where I have been able to find 12 poems in *fornyrðislag* with 75 long lines or more. These poems are more disparate than those in the Codex Regius. Not only are there mythological poems (such as Hyndluljóð) and heroic poems (such as Innsteinskviða), but also two poems in memory of contemporary kings: Sigurðarbálkr and Erfikvæði um Magnús berfœtt, as well as Merlínússpá, which is *sui generis*.

For convenience and ease of comparison, in each case I have used the same edition as Kuhn did (see Kuhn 1933:4). I have thus used the Heusler-Ranisch edition of Hervararkviða, Hlǫðskviða, Hrókskviða, Innsteinskviða, Mannjafnaðr, and Víkarsbálkr, and Finnur Jónsson's edition of Erfikvæði um Magnús berfœtt, Sigurðarbálkr, and Merlínússpá. For the text of Grottasǫngr, Hyndluljóð, and Rígsþula, I have used Kuhn's (1983) updated version of Neckel's edition; in the article under discussion, Kuhn (1933:20) used Neckel's 1927 edition:

(23) Grottasǫngr

   2.1–2   Þær   at lúðri /leiddar   vóru.
            they.FEM to mill-crib /led.FEM.PL were
            'They were led to the mill-crib.'

   3.1   Þær   þyt   þulo.
            they.FEM   whistling-sound uttered.PL
            'They uttered a whistling sound.'

    11.1–2 Vér vetr   nío   /vórom leicor.
                 we   winters nine /were   playmates
                 'We were playmates for nine winters.'

    17.2   hallr   standa mun
                 stone stand   will
                 'The stone will stand (still).'

(24) Hlǫðskviða
    12.5–6 þá hornungr /á haugi sat
                 then bastard   /on mound sat
                 'Then the bastard sat on the mound.'

(25) Hyndluljóð
    1.6   ríða við   scolom
                 ride we.DUAL shall
                 'We two shall ride.'

    8.2   sitia við   scolom
                 sit   we.DUAL shall
                 'We two shall sit.'

    10.1   Hǫrg   hann mér   gerði.
                 altar.ACC he   me.DAT made
                 'He made me an altar.'

    37.1   Hann Giálp um   bar.
                 him   Giálp EXPL bore
                 'Giálp gave birth to him.'

    37.2   hann Greip um   bar
                 him   Greip EXPL bore
                 'Greip gave birth to him.'

(26) Mannjafnaðr
    9.5–6   vér berserki   /binda knáttum
              we   berserks.ACC /bind   did
              'We bound berserks.'

(27) Merlínússpá I
    11.1–2   Hon þá   drekkr /et dýra   vatn.
              she then drinks /the precious water
              'Then she drinks the precious water.'

    I 15.1–2   Þeir   þjótandi /þrjár   of   hrœra.
              they.MASC whistling /three.FEM EXPL move
              'They move three with a whistling sound.'

    I 20.1–2   Þat Lundúnum   /líkar illa.
              this London.PL.DAT /likes badly
              'London dislikes this.'

    I 31.1–2   Þeir   snarliga /sundraukn búa.
              they.MASC quickly /strait-beasts prepare.PL
              'They quickly prepare the strait-beasts (ships).'

    I 47.1–2   Hann Kambríe   /kallar sveitir.
              he   Wales.GEN /calls   forces
              'He calls to the forces of Wales.'

    I 49.1   Þeir   flest   taka.
              they.MASC most.PL.ACC take.PL
              'They take most things.'

    I 58.5–8   sól ok máni /sjǫlf   annan   veg
              sun and moon /self.PL another way

/fara fagrskǫpuð
/go   fairly-shaped

'The fairly shaped sun and moon themselves go another way.'

II 18.1   Þeir víg   gera /vats   farveg   í
          they battle.ACC do   /lake.GEN channel.DAT in
          'They do battle in the channel from the lake.'

II 57.1   Sá   bjartar brýtr /borgir   Íra.
          that-one bright.PL breaks /fortresses.ACC Irishmen.GEN
          'He breaks the bright fortresses of the Irish.'

(28) Rígsþula
    11.1–2   Miðra   fletia   /meirr settiz hon.
             middle.PL.GEN bench.PL.GEN   /more sat.REFL she
             'She seated herself more in the middle of the bench.'

    36.3–4   Rígr gangandi, /rúnar   kendi.
             Rígr walking   /runes.ACC   taught
             'Walking Rígr taught runes.'

    45.1–2   Hann við Ríg iarl /rúnar   deildi.
             he   with Rígr jarl /runes.ACC   contended
             'He contended with Rígr jarl in runes.'

(29) Sigurðarbálkr
    18.1   Sér   framliga /friðar   leitaði.
             himself.DAT   boldly   /peace.GEN   sought
             'He boldly sought peace for himself.'

(30) Víkarsbálkr
    2.1–4   Þá   er   Herþiófr /Harald   of   vélti,
             then when Herþiófr /Harald.ACC   EXPL deceived

/sér   óiafnan   /sveik í tryggðum.
himself.DAT unequal.ACC   /betrayed in truce.PL.DAT

'When Herþiófr deceived Haraldr he betrayed someone not his equal in time of truce.'

2.5–6   Egða   dróttin   /ǫndu   rænti.
        Egðar.GEN lord.ACC   /breath.DAT robbed
        'He robbed the lord of the Egðar of life.'

3.1–2   Þrévetran   mik   /þaðan   of flutti.
        three-winters-old.ACC me.ACC /from-there   EXPL moved
        'He moved me from there when I was three winters old.'

15.5   svá ek af   heiptum   /hiǫrvi   beittak
        so I from hatred.PL.DAT /sword.DAT used-I
        'So I used the sword in rage.'

Poem	Long lines	V2 violations	Ratio
Erfikvæði um Magnús berfœtt	80	0	0.0%
Grottasǫngr	91	4	4.4%
Hervararkviða	113	0	0.0%
Hlǫðskviða	96.5	1	1.0%
Hrókskviða	104	0	0.0%
Hyndluljóð	195	5	2.6%
Innsteinskviða	96	0	0.0%
Mannjafnaðr	85	1	1.2%
Merlínússpá	749	9	1.2%
Rígsþula	183	3	1.6%
Sigurðarbálkr	161	1	0.6%
Vikarsbálkr	102	4	3.9%
Sum	2055.5	28	1.4%

Table 3. Poems not in the Codex Regius.

Erfikvæði um Magnús berfœtt, Hervararkviða, Hrókskviða, and Innsteinskviða contain no instances of V2 violation in unbound clauses (see table 3 above).

Taken as a whole, these poems have a lower V2 violations ratio than that of even the native poems in the Codex Regius. The only poems above to show a high frequency of V2 violations are Grottasǫngr and Víkarsbálkr, both of which are native poems. Presumably, Kuhn would have explained the instances in these poems as a coincidence or as a result of influence from *ljóðaháttr*. The only foreign matter poem on the list is Hlǫðskviða, which does not show a particularly high frequency of V2 violations.

On the whole, Kuhn's explanation remains somewhat unconvincing. The poems in the Codex Regius have, by and large, a higher frequency of V2 violations than poems outside the Codex Regius, but one might wonder if foreign influence on the former group is the best explanation for this. The Codex Regius is a unique manuscript in many respects, representing a deliberate and early effort to collect traditional alliterative poetry. Poems in other manuscripts are usually integrated into prose narratives, and most of those manuscripts are significantly newer.

4.3. An Alternative Account.
It is natural to ask whether one can offer another explanation for the late placement of the finite verb in unbound clauses in *fornyrðislag*. Recall that late placement of the finite verb in bound clauses was explained by Kuhn, in my view convincingly, as an archaic holdover from an earlier stage of the language. Could not the same phenomenon in unbound clauses also be an archaic feature? This seems like a very straightforward explanation that would remove the need to posit influence from hypothetical West Germanic poems, on the one hand, and from poems in *ljóðaháttr*, on the other.

Can it be confirmed that Proto-Norse poetry had instances of late placement of the finite verb in unbound clauses? As luck would have it, it can. The inscription on the Gallehus gold horn (dated ca. 400) contains what unmistakably qualifies as a Germanic long line (Schulte 2009:5).

(31) Ek Hlewagastiz Holtijaz /horna   tawido.
     I   Hlewagastiz Holtijaz /horn.ACC made
     'I, Hlewagastiz Holtijaz, made the horn.'

The example in 31 contains an unbound clause, and its finite verb *tawido* 'made' is clearly in a late position (see Þórhallur Eyþórsson 2001:22–23 for a more detailed analysis). Some of the Eddic instances above have a similar structure. Here is one example:

(32) Oddrúnargrátr

    17.1–2   Brynhildr í   búri   /borða   racþi.
                Brynhildr in bower.DAT /border.ACC embroidered
                'Brynhildr embroidered a border in the bower.'

The *fornyrðislag* meter is the most direct descendant of the common Germanic meter. It seems plausible that it would preserve some archaic linguistic features not found in more recently developed meters, such as *dróttkvætt*.

Given this, I propose that late placement of the verb is an archaic remnant of the freedom in word order present in the language at an earlier stage. If this were true, it would be reasonable to expect late placement to occur most prominently in the oldest poems and ever less in the newer ones. It has already been mentioned that Kuhn did not detect a significant difference between older and newer poems in this respect; however, since I do not believe Heusler's chronology of the Eddic poems to be accurate, this is not necessarily a problem.

However, if the Eddic chronology of Heusler and his followers is not to be trusted, then what criterion can be used to evaluate the idea that late placement of the verb is an archaic feature? I propose to compare this putative archaic feature with another feature known to be archaic. The most suitable linguistic feature of this sort is the expletive particle *um/of*.

A conspicuous feature of Gothic and the West Germanic languages is the presence of unstressed prefixes, such as *ga-/ge-*. In Old Norse, the corresponding prefixes were almost completely lost, and very few traces of them remain in the oldest prose texts. In old poetry, however, the expletive particle variously written as *of* or *um* represents the remnants of the old prefixes. Thus, Old Norse *rúni* 'friend, confidant' corresponds to Old English *gerúna* 'counselor, confidant'. In Haustlǫng, the oldest poem to preserve this word, it appears as *of rúni*.

In his detailed study of the expletive particle, Kuhn (1929) pointed out that it was most amply present in the oldest poetry and declined in

usage as time went by. In a commendable study of the use of *um*/*of* in the 9th–12th centuries, Fidjestøl (1999:212–217) demonstrated a high correlation between the age of a poet and the frequency with which he used the expletive particle. One would expect the same tendency to hold true for Eddic poetry. On this basis, I use the frequency of the expletive particle as a measure for how archaic the language of a given poem is. Fidjestøl (1999:224) has already tabulated occurrences of the expletive particle in poems of the Codex Regius, and I use his numbers. For the other poems, I have conducted my own search. Just as when I was searching for V2 violations, I have used the text of the editions and not resorted to independent textual criticism.

Identifying the expletive particle is usually a straightforward task. However, where the text is unclear it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it from the proposition *um*/*of*. There are two instances of this ambiguity in Grottasǫngr. Verse 7.4 *né of sal gaucar* 'nor the cuckoos over the hall(?)' is hard to interpret, but *of* seems more likely to be a preposition than an expletive particle, so I have not counted it. Conversely, verse 17.4 *mitt of leiti*/*létti*/*hleyti* 'for my part(?)' is somewhat obscure, but here *of* looks more like an expletive particle, so I have counted it (as did Kuhn 1929:22); for the latest attempts to grapple with these problems see Tolley 2008:48, 54; Dronke 2011:139–149. The findings are summarized in table 4, which shows that there is a strong tendency for poems with a high frequency of the expletive particle to also have a high frequency of V2 violations, and vice versa. One formal way to estimate the statistical dependence between two variables is to calculate Spearman's rho. This non-parametric method was used by Fidjestøl (1999) in his study of the expletive particle and is also appropriate for my purposes here. Following Spearman's method, one is concerned not with the absolute value of the variables, but with their rank. The poem with the highest frequency of V2 violations is assigned a rank of 1, the poem with the second highest frequency—a rank of 2, and so forth. Similarly, the poem with the highest frequency of the expletive particle is assigned a rank of 1, and so forth. The two different rankings can then be compared.

Poem	Long lines	V2 violations	V2-ratio	*Um/of*	*Um/of-*ratio
Brot af Sigurðarkviðu	75	6	8.0%	5	6.7%
Vǫlundarkviða	143	10	7.0%	10	7.0%
Guðrúnarkviða II	175	11	6.3%	6	3.4%
Guðrúnarkviða I	100.5	6	6.0%	8	8.0%
Hamðismál	106	6	5.7%	8	7.5%
Þrymskviða	109	6	5.5%	15	13.8%
Vǫluspá	269	13	4.8%	17	6.3%
Guðrúnarhvǫt	87	4	4.6%	5	5.7%
Grottasǫngr	91	4	4.4%	3	3.3%
Vikarsbálkr	102	4	3.9%	6	5.9%
Grípisspá	209	8	3.8%	3	1.4%
Oddrúnargrátr	125	4	3.2%	12	9.6%
Atlakviða	175.5	5	2.8%	6	3.4%
Hyndluljóð	195	5	2.6%	4	2.1%
Sigurðarkviða in skamma	279	6	2.2%	14	5.0%
Hymiskviða	152	3	2.0%	7	4.6%
Rígsþula	183	3	1.6%	2	1.1%
Helgakviða Hundingsbana II	210	3	1.4%	2	1.0%
Merlínússpá I–II	749	9	1.2%	7	0.9%
Mannjafnaðr	85	1	1.2%	1	1.2%
Hlǫðskviða	96,5	1	1.0%	1	1.0%
Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar	100	1	1.0%	3	3.0%
Helgakviða Hundingsbana I	227	2	0.9%	3	1.3%
Sigurðarbálkr	161	1	0.6%	0	0.0%
Innsteinskviða	96	0	0.0%	3	3.1%
Hrókskviða	104	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Hervararkviða	113	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Erfikvæði Magnúsar	80	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table 4. Frequency of V2 violations and the expletive particle.

Poem	V2-rank	*um*/*of*-rank	Difference
Brot af Sigurðarkviðu	1	6	5
Vǫlundarkviða	2	5	3
Guðrúnarkviða II	3	12	9
Guðrúnarkviða I	4	3	1
Hamðismál	5	4	1
Þrymskviða	6	1	5
Vǫluspá	7	7	0
Guðrúnarhvǫt	8	9	1
Grottasǫngr	9	14	5
Vikarsbálkr	10	8	2
Grípisspá	11	18	7
Oddrúnargrátr	12	2	10
Atlakviða	13	13	0
Hyndluljóð	14	17	3
Sigurðarkviða in skamma	15	10	5
Hymiskviða	16	11	5
Rígsþula	17	21	4
Helgakviða Hundingsbana II	18	24	6
Merlínússpá I–II	19	25	6
Mannjafnaðr	20	20	0
Hlǫðskviða	21	22	1
Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar	22	16	6
Helgakviða Hundingsbana I	23	19	4
Sigurðarbálkr	24	27	3
Innsteinskviða	26.5	15	11,5
Hrókskviða	26.5	23	3,5
Hervararkviða	26.5	27	0,5
Erfikvæði Magnúsar	26.5	27	0,5

Table 5. V2 violations and occurrences of the expletive particle.

The dataset in table 5 gives a Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.81 ($p < 0.001$), consistent with a strong link between the two variables.

Table 5 allows us to identify outliers at a glance. The most noticeable outlier is Innsteinskviða, which contains no V2 violations but shows a moderately high frequency of the expletive particle. It is worth looking at the three instances of the particle in the poem.

(33) 2.5–6   Ásmundr   hefir   /oss   **of**   boðna
            Ásmundr   has   /us   EXPL   offered
            'Ásmundr has offered to us.'

   4.1–2   Ásmundr   hefir   /oss   of   unnit
            Ásmundr   has   /us   EXPL   pledged
            'Ásmundr has pledged to us.'

   5.3–6   er   þú   Ásmundi   allvel   trúir;
            that   thou   Ásmundr.DAT   very well   believest;

            /hann   mun   alla   /oss   of   véla
            /he   will   all   /us   EXPL   trick

            'that you believe Ásmundr so well; he will trick us all'

What these data show is essentially the repetition of the expletive particle within similar formulaic expressions in close proximity. I count these as three instances since the repetition is not exact. Nevertheless, it is a less convincing case of archaic language than three independent occurrences of the expletive article would have been. I have no particular explanation for other outliers, and I think none is needed. The variation seems well within the bounds one would expect by random probability.

5. Conclusion.

The behavior of the finite verb in Old Norse texts varies substantially among different text types. The most important types are summarized as follows:

- *Fornyrðislag* poetry: Late placement is frequent in bound clauses and occasionally occurs in unbound clauses.

- *Dróttkvætt* poetry: V2 is strictly observed in unbound clauses, but late placement is frequent in bound clauses.

- Old Icelandic prose: Symmetric V2 is observed. Late placement of the finite verb does not occur in any clause type.

It is commonly acknowledged that finite verb behavior in *dróttkvætt* poetry preserves a more archaic stage of the language than prose does. In this article, I have further argued that the word order in *fornyrðislag* poetry represents an even more archaic stage of the language. This claim is supported by comparative evidence, namely, the high correlation between the two variables: late verb placement in unbound clauses versus the use of the archaic expletive particle. In my view, the account presented here is better supported by the facts than Kuhn's theory of West Germanic influence on some poems and *ljóðaháttr* influence on other poems. This analysis contributes to a better understanding of how Old Norse poetry can serve as a window into the development of Germanic syntax.

Some caveats, however, are in order. While I think it is reasonable to use the expletive particle as an indication for how archaic the language of a given poem is, this approach is not without its problems. It is conceivable that the use of the expletive particle is connected with the position of the verb in some more direct way than both being archaic features. Further work on the dating of Eddic poetry may yield a clearer answer on this front. The significant progress made in the dating of Anglo-Saxon poetry (see, for instance, Fulk 1992) inspires confidence that more rigorous results on Old Norse poetry can be obtained.

Finally, it must be stressed that Kuhn's theory of West Germanic influence on Old Norse poetry rested on a number of linguistic and metrical criteria, and this article has only dealt with one of them. If West Germanic influence on the Kuhnian model can be established, it is possible that in some cases such influence reinforced archaic features already present. While I am generally skeptical about the *Fremd-stofflieder* theory, evaluating it as a whole is a complicated task, and it continues to provide a valid starting point for investigations (see, for instance, Suzuki 2010).

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